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An interesting effect of wind-driven sand is noted (p. 22) as having been observed between Rimlon and Palm Springs, Cal. Here the sand-laden winds constitute a veritable sand blast. The western faces of the telegraph poles are deeply cut within two feet of the ground by the driven sand, and the employés of the railroad have found it necessary to pile up stones around the base of the poles to prevent their being cut off. A creosote bush in the lee of a small boulder had all its twigs which projected beyond the protection of the boulder killed by the sand blast, and the plant resembled a miniature box hedge about a foot and half wide, extending about four feet from the rock. R. DEC. W.

*Aperçu des Résultats météorologiques de l'Hivernage antarctique de la "Belgica." Par Henryk Arctowski. 12mo. Bruxelles, 1904. pp. 41.*

The meteorological results obtained on the *Belgica* expedition have already been discussed in more or less detail by M. Arctowski in various papers published in *Ciel et Terre* soon after the return of the expedition, and have been referred to in the BULLETIN. The present little volume, which is reprinted from the *Annuaire météorologique* of the Royal Observatory of Belgium for 1904, is the official summary of the results, which are presented in compact form, but with little discussion. The meteorological journal of the expedition, which has not yet been published, will, together with the papers already printed and the present report, give a complete survey of the meteorological work of the *Belgica* expedition.

R. DEC. W.

*The Mystic Mid-region; the Deserts of the Southwest. By Arthur J. Burdick. With 54 illustrations. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904. 8vo.*

The region here described is from two hundred to five hundred miles wide, and from seven hundred to eight hundred miles long, and it extends far down into Mexico. It lies largely in eastern California, in Nevada, and in the extreme western portion of Arizona.

While this country is in many respects a formidable waste, there is much that is attractive in connection with it.

The narrow and restricted lives of the desert Indian tribes—the Panamints in the north, the Mojaves in the Mojave Desert, the Yumas lower down, and the Cocopas and the Seris in the

extreme south—are a wonderful example of the adaptability of man to conditions.

These people wring a scanty subsistence from their inhospitable land. Those who live near the Colorado catch fish; but to many of the desert dwellers fish and game are almost unknown. The cactus furnishes a large portion of their food. The fibres of the plant are woven into a coarse cloth, which gives them clothing, and mud and sticks form the materials for their houses. These people manufacture baskets, curios, and coarse pottery.

There is no greater mistake than to imagine the desert without plant life. Cacti in innumerable variety abound; there are also sage, mesquite, chaparral, and greasewood, and numbers of other plants, many producing beautiful flowers.

The mineral wealth of the desert is of no little importance. Death Valley has among the most important borax mines in the world—thirty thousand acres of deposits having been located to date. Gold, tin, copper, lead, zinc, iron, gypsum, sulphur, onyx, and other rare stones are also found here.

Portions of the mid-region are considerably below the level of the sea. In fact, there are two papers in the Colorado Desert printed below sea-level.

As an interpreter of the desert—its dreadfulness, its charm, its mystery, its wonderful variety—Mr. Burdick deserves very high praise. He writes out of a loving experience, and describes with charm and faithfulness.

U. F. D.

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## NOTES AND NEWS.

### NOTICE TO FELLOWS OF THE SOCIETY.

The foreign delegates to the Eighth International Geographic Congress will be the guests of the Society during the three-days' session in this city, September 13-15. The business and proceedings of the Congress assigned to these days will be transacted at the house of the Society and in the lecture-rooms of the American Museum of Natural History through the kind co-operation of that institution. A large and important part of the scientific programme will be carried out in this city, and the Fellows of the Society will have an opportunity to attend the meetings and participate in the entertainments of this exceptional occasion.